

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
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AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 3256

USEC USOECD

COPENHAGEN FOR FISHERIES ATTACHE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EFIS, PBOR, NO
SUBJECT: RECENT SVALBARD FPZ DEVELOPMENTS

REF: OSLO 3032

1. LOS MINISTER JENS EVENSEN ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY ON JUNE 30 THAT HE HAS REQUESTED TALKS WITH SOVIET FISHERIES MINISTER ISHKOV TO ADDRESS QUOTE OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS CONCERNING THE GON'S SVALBARD FISHERIES PROTECTION ZONE. UNQUOTE THE MEETING, HE SAID, WILL FOCUS ON THE PROBLEM OF SOVIET FAILURE TO REPORT FISH CATCHES IN THE FPZ AREA. OFFICIALS ON EVENSEN'S STAFF SAY THAT THE REQUEST IS IN RESPONSE TO QUOTE STRONG SIGNALS UNQUOTE FROM ISHKOV DURING THE LATTER'S TALKS WITH GON FISHERIES MINISTER BOLLE IN MOSCOW LAST MONTH.

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2. EVENSEN IS CONFIDENT THAT TALKS WILL TAKE PLACE AND THAT AS A RESULT THE SOVIETS WILL AGREE DE FACTO TO HONOR THE CATCH REPORTING REQUIREMENTS IMPOSED BY THE GON IN THE FPZ AREA ON JUNE 15, 1977. HE EXPECTS THEM TO ADOPT SOME FORM OF HIS PROPOSAL OF LAST MARCH THAT THE SOVIETS PUBLISH BARENTS SEA CATCH STATISTICS BASED ON THE NEAFC AREA COUNT SYSTEM. THIS WOULD PROVIDE THE GON WITH REQUIRED FPZ

DATA, YET WOULD NOT PREJUDICE THE SOVIETS POSITION
WITH RESPECT TO NORWAY'S RIGHT TO IMPOSE REGULATORY MEASURES
AFFECTING SVALBARD WATERS.

3. NEAFC FORMALLY CEASED TO EXIST ON JULY 1 AND IT IS
STILL NOT CLEAR WHETHER THE SOVIETS PLAN TO HONOR THE
OTHER TWO ELEMENTS OF THE FPZ PACKAGE (TWO TRAWL FREE
ZONES TO PROTECT IMMATURE FISH AND NEAFC INSPIRED NET MESH
SIZES AND MINIMUM SIZED FISH TAKES). HOWEVER, THE SOVIETS
HAVE NOT BEEN SIGHTED WITHIN THE FPZ'S TRAWL FREE ZONES
(DESPITE SOME 43 SOVIET FISHING VESSELS NOW IN THE FPZ
AREA) AND IT IS BEGINNING TO BE ASSUMED BY THE GON THAT
THIS REFLECTS POLICY RATHER THAN THE HAZARDS OF FISHING. MORE
INTERESTING IS WHETHER INSPECTION OF SOVITE TRAWLERS BY
GON VESSELS WILL BE PERMITTED NOW THAT NEAFC HAS EXPIRED
AND WITH IT THE SOVIET'S RATIONALE FOR ACCEPTING GON
INSPECTIONS. THE GON WILL SHORTLY ATTEMPT TO MAKE INSPECTIONS
WITH NO VARIATION IN THE USUAL PROCEDURE OR FREQUENCY,
AND THE GON HOPES THE SOVIETS WILL ACCEPT THESE INSPECTIONS
AS ROUTINE.

4. COMMENT: THE SOLUTION EVENSEN HAS PROPOSED TO SOLVE
THE CONTENTIOUS REPORTING ISSUE WOULD GIVE AN IMPRESSION
OF SOVIET REASONABLENESS AND WOULD FURTHER CONSERVATION MEASURES
USEFUL TO THEM WITHOUT ENTAILING ACTUAL RECOGNITION
OF NORWEGIAN MEASURES TO REGULATE FISHING IN THE FPZ AREA.
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IF THE SOVIETS DECIDE WHEN THEY MEET WITH EVENSEN THAT THEY CAN
ACCEPT SUCH A REPORTING REQUIREMENT, THE GON WILL HAVE SUCCEEDED
IN ITS EFFORTS TO BE SEEN AT LEAST DE FACTO TO REGULATE
FISHING IN THE WATERS AROUND SVALBARD. A FAVORABLE DECISION
WOULD ALSO SHORE UP EVENSEN'S SHAKY POSITION WITH HIS
NORTHERN FISHERMEN CONSTITUENTS WHO CONTINUE TO BE
DISGRUNTLED OVER BELIEVED SOVIET VIOLATIONS IN THE GREY
ZONE. IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE WHETHER EVENSEN'S
QUOTE STRONG SIGNALS UNQUOTE AMOUNT TO ANYTHING.
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